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TAGS: [MARR](#) [PARM](#) [PREL](#) [NATO](#) [FR](#)
SUBJECT: SOME FRENCH THOUGHTS ON U.S. MISSILE DEFENSE PLANS
IN EUROPE

REF: A) STATE 26910 B) USNATO 133

Classified By: Political Minister-Counselor Josiah Rosenblatt, Reason 1
.4 B/D

11. (C) On March 9, in a follow-up to ref B missile defense discussions at NATO, and in the absence of MFA DAS-equivalent Director for Nonproliferation Philippe Errera, we met with Melanie Rosselet and Luis Vassy, nonproliferation desk officers at the MFA. Vassy noted that France understood U.S. missile defense objectives, but that it stood by its own autonomous defense doctrine/force. He added that the French were keeping a low profile on the potential deployment of interceptors and corresponding radar in Poland and the Czech Republic, which they viewed as a bilateral issue between the U.S. and each of these countries. France nonetheless had appreciated the briefings provided at NATO, and MFA officials were looking forward to further discussions with General Obering on March 16 in Paris.

12. (C) Vassy and Rosselet said the MFA remained curious as to how we viewed missile defense with respect to the upcoming NPT Prepcom discussions, as well as other arms control/nonproliferation treaties. More significantly, Vassy and Rosselet expressed interest in learning about U.S. views on the linkage between the U.S. missile program and NATO's own missile defense planning, especially with respect to the question of command and control. We noted that they could be complementary, but suggested they wait for General Obering's upcoming briefing for further details.

13. (C) Using ref A guidance, as well as General Obering's comments before the Foreign Press Center on February 22 in Washington, we addressed some of Rosselet's questions, such as how the U.S. envisioned handling potential debris and likely construction completion dates.

14. (C) Vassy also noted Russian objections to the location of our proposed missile defense in central Europe, but agreed that Russia had been amply briefed. He observed, however, that Russian reactions will need to be carefully addressed. It also would be interesting to see how the Chinese view the missile defense debate, he added.

15. (C) Comment: Separately, we note that President Chirac during the press conference following the European Council meeting warned against "the creation of new dividing lines in Europe or a situation in which each country goes its own way." It will be interesting to see how the MFA folds this perspective into its discussions with General Obering. End comment.

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